

JOSHUA

INTRODUCTION

In the Book of Genesis Israel was born. In the Book of Exodus Israel was chosen. In the Book of Numbers the nation was proven. In the Book of Leviticus it was brought nigh by the blood. In Deuteronomy it was instructed. Now in the Book of Joshua it faces conflict and conquest.

The Book of Joshua completes the redemption of Israel that was begun in Exodus. Exodus is the book of redemption out of Egypt; Joshua is the book of redemption into the Promised Land.

The key word in the Book of Joshua is possession. God had given the children of Israel their land in an unconditional covenant. To Abraham He had said, "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God" ([Gen. 17:8](#)). However, Israel's possession of the land was conditional. There was conflict and there was conquest. They had to fight battles and lay hold of their possessions. And, as Joshua reminded them in his final message before his death, their obedience to the Word of God would determine their continued possession of the land.

The Talmud says that Joshua wrote all but the concluding five verses, which were written by Phinehas. Joshua was the successor to Moses. He was a great general. Born a slave in Egypt, he was forty years old at the time of the Exodus out of Egypt. He was eighty years old when he received his commission as Moses' successor and one hundred ten years old at his death. Joshua had already gained prominence during the wilderness wanderings. When they were attacked by the army of Amalek, it was Joshua who organized the men into an army that fought off Amalek. Joshua served as a minister or servant to Moses. References to him in that connection reveal his loyalty to Moses and his devotion to God. At Kadesh-barnea he was one of the twelve men who went to spy out the land of Canaan. He is one of the two spies that returned with a favorable report in full confidence that God would give them the land.

Joshua's name means "Jehovah saves." The same word in the New Testament is Jesus. Joshua was a man of courage, dependence upon God, faith, leadership, enthusiasm, and fidelity. He is a type of Christ in his name and in his work. As another has said, "Joshua shows that a man of average ability may become a leader in the church. Joshua received his call not in flaming letters written across the sky, but from an older man who knew God and knew Joshua, and saw that he was fitted by God to be a leader."

The Book of Joshua has a very practical application to the believer today. The Promised Land cannot be a type of heaven since heaven is not a place of conflict and conquest. Heaven is received as a gift of the grace of God. Rather, the Promised Land represents the place to which believers are brought right here in this world today. The Book of Joshua corresponds to the Epistle to the Ephesians in the New Testament where we see that the believer is blessed with all spiritual blessings. The practical possession and experience of them depends upon conflict and conquest. These are never attained through

the energy of the flesh, but through the power of the Holy Spirit in the yielded life of the believer. The Book of Joshua is the pattern, and it illustrates the method by which the believer can possess what God has given to him.

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Chapter 1

THEME: Commission and command of Joshua

In the first twelve chapters of Joshua the Promised Land is entered. Then in chapters 13 -- 21 we see the land divided. The book concludes with the final message of Joshua to his people.

The great theme of Joshua is possession. In this first chapter we will see what is meant by that.

The chapter opens with the Lord personally giving Joshua his commission and his command.

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying [[Josh. 1:1](#)].

The first word of this verse, Now, should be translated "And," which connects it with the final chapter of Deuteronomy. And is a connective. The minute a speaker says and, he has to keep talking because and connects something that has gone before with something that is coming. This supports the theory that [Deuteronomy 34](#) was written by Joshua.

Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel [[Josh. 1:2](#)].

"Moses my servant is dead." As we have seen, Moses was not essential to lead the children of Israel into the land. In fact, he could not bring them into the Land of Promise. Moses represented the Law and the Law cannot save us. The Law is a revealer and not a redeemer. It shows us that we are sinners. The Law was never a savior. Moses could not lead Israel into the land because of his failure. The problem was not with the Law but with Moses just as the problem is with us. The Law reveals that we have fallen short of the glory of God. "Moses my servant is dead." Only Jesus our Savior, our Joshua, can lead us into the place of blessing He has for us.

This verse tells us that the land was given to Israel. Israel's ownership was unconditional. God promised it to Abraham and his offspring. God reaffirmed His promise again and again in the Book of Genesis. In the Book of Deuteronomy God made the Palestinian covenant with Israel which gave them the land as an everlasting possession.

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses [[Josh. 1:3](#)].

God has given them the land. The land is theirs, but their enjoyment of it depends upon their taking possession of it. That part of the land upon which they walked would belong to them. Comparatively speaking, we have been told in [Ephesians 1:3](#) that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. Unfortunately, very few Christians lay hold of the spiritual blessings that belong to them.

Years ago a certain Englishman moved to the United States. Soon after he arrived he dropped out of sight. One day his uncle in England died and left him about a five-million dollar estate. Scotland Yard went about trying to locate the man whose last address had been in Chicago. They searched for him but never found him. Later I heard that he was found one morning frozen to death in an entryway of a cheap hotel. He could not afford twenty-five cents for a room although he was heir to five million dollars! He did not claim what was his. He did not lay hold of what belonged to him.

Although God gave Israel the Promised Land, they never possessed all of it. As a matter of fact, Israel got very little of the land. Many Christians today are like Israel in that they are blessed with all spiritual blessings and yet they die like bums in a doorway without

claiming those blessings as their own. What a tragedy that is. The Book of Joshua is going to tell us how to lay hold of our possessions. Because there will be conflict, we are told in [Ephesians 6](#) to put on the whole armor of God. We have a spiritual enemy fighting against us. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" ([Eph. 6:12](#)). Ours is a spiritual enemy.

We will have to wear the whole armor of God. The victory has to be won. However, you and I don't get the victory; the Lord Jesus Christ gets the victory. We will get what Israel got -- deliverance and possessions. Every victory Israel gained was given by God. If you and I ever win a victory, He will win it for us. We will, by faith, enter into these wonderful possessions.

From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river,
the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great
sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast [[Josh.
1:4](#)].

God gave Israel 300,000 square miles of land and the most they ever claimed was 30,000 square miles. They did not do very well, did they? They took possession of about one-tenth of what God had given them. That is about the same amount of spiritual possessions claimed by believers today.

There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days
of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail
thee, nor forsake thee [[Josh. 1:5](#)].

Joshua, average man that he was, needed to be encouraged. God encouraged him here in a most wonderful way. God says, "I won't desert you. Just as I was with Moses, I'll be with you."

Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou
divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers
to give them.

Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest
observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant
commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left,
that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest [[Josh. 1:6-7](#)].

Twice God says to him, "Be strong and of a good courage." He is encouraging him.

Now notice something that is all important:

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou
shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to
do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make
thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success [[Josh.
1:8](#)].

There were no written Scriptures before Moses, and God communicated to Moses by speaking with him face to face. But Moses had faithfully recorded all that God had given to him so that the first five books of the Bible were available to Joshua and the people of

Israel. In it God had given them all they needed to know to enter the land. They were not to depart from it. They were to meditate on it and observe to do it.

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest [[Josh. 1:9](#)].

Joshua is to take the Word of God in one hand and a sword in the other. He is to move out by faith. God encourages him again to be strong and courageous.

Friends, like Joshua, we as believers need to be strong and courageous. We need to possess our spiritual possessions by faith. Remember we are in enemy territory.

Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying [[Josh. 1:10](#)].

Joshua took charge, and he didn't do it by presumption but in confidence. He did it because God told him to do it.

God had told Moses He would be with him. When Moses returned to Egypt, after spending years in Midian, he was fearful, but God said, "Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" ([Exod. 4:12](#)). This is God's method. When God called Jeremiah in a dark and difficult day, He said, "And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee" ([Jer. 1:19](#)). We need the kind of conviction and courage spoken about in [Hebrews 13:6](#), "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." When David first said these words, which were quoted in Hebrews from [Psalm 118:6](#), he turned his mind and heart away from that which was seen to that which was unseen. It means that he became occupied with the living and true God. He recognized the spiritual bond that was between him and the Lord. His soul was "bound up in a bundle of life with God." He could say, "The Lord is my helper." David knew that the Lord could deliver him.

Joshua believed God. God had encouraged him and told him to step out. The Word of God was to be his authority. It was not to depart out of his mouth. He was to meditate on it. He was to do what was written in the Word. That is the formula of faith.

Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it [[Josh. 1:11](#)].

Israel's ownership of the land is unconditional, but Israel's possession of it is conditional. Israel had to take the land. The key word of the Book of Joshua is not victory -- it is God who gets the victory. The key word is possession. Israel was to possess the land.

A little later on, when Israel got into the land, the manna ceased and they ate the old corn of the land. That would be corn they captured from the enemy, old corn, because they hadn't had a chance to grow it. As you recall, they had to gather manna every day. Manna would not keep. If it was kept for more than one day, it became unfit to eat. The children of Israel had to gather manna every morning. That is why we are told in [Ephesians 5:18](#)

to be filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is not a one-time job. You do not go to the gas station once and tell the attendant to fill up your tank and then seal the tank because you will never need more gas. That would be presumption. In fact, it would be foolish and stupid. There are many Christians, however, who think that they can have one experience and that is it. My friend, if you are going to walk with Him and live for Him, you will need a daily filling of the Holy Spirit of God. In fact, since you fill up the physical man three times a day, it would not be a bad idea to fill up the spiritual man three times a day. We all need a constant filling of the Holy Spirit, a looking to Him, and a resting upon Him.

And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying [[Josh. 1:12](#)].

These two and one-half tribes did not cross over the river to settle there, and we find their defection very early. Moses was still alive when they came to the east bank of the Jordan, and you will find that they made a request recorded in [Numbers 32:1-2, 5](#): "Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle; the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest . . . saying . . . Wherefore, . . . if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan." This was the specific request of two and one-half tribes. They were asking for land on the wrong side of the Jordan River.

Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land.

Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them;

Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as he hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD'S servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising [[Josh. 1:13-15](#)].

Joshua is reminding them that Moses had given them permission to live on the east side of Jordan on the condition that their army would help the other tribes possess their land on the west of the river. This they agree to do.

And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go.

According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses.

Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him,

he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage
[\[Josh. 1:16-18\]](#).

Perhaps you are asking the questions, Well, what is wrong with dwelling on the east side of the River Jordan? Is it so essential to cross over the river? Is not the east bank of the Jordan River part of the Promised Land? Such questions are pertinent and require that we look at the passage of Scripture in which lies the account of the crossing of the Jordan River, which we will do shortly.

Crossing the Jordan River was symbolic of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Under no condition, however, does it set forth our physical death. We often sing the old song, "On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand." To begin with, that is not a stormy stream; neither do you and I stand on the stormy banks. Christ alone was nailed to that cross and, hanging there, bore all the storms of the judgment of sin. When the storms of judgment fell on Him, they fell on us. The River Jordan speaks of sanctification, and the death of Christ was for our sanctification.

In the Book of Judges we find out that the two and one-half tribes made a big mistake staying on the wrong side of Jordan. Also, when Christ crossed the Sea of Galilee and came to the country of the Gadarenes, He found the Jews in the pig business. They started off wrong on the wrong side of the Jordan River.

Many Christians are in the pig business today and are frustrated. They ought to enter into the rest He has provided in His death and resurrection.

Chapter 2

THEME: Contact of spies with Rahab

Here we are introduced to a woman, a very shady character. She was a prostitute, and her name is Rahab. The remarkable fact is that in the New Testament she is listed with those who are commonly called the heroes of faith. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace" ([Heb. 11:31](#)). I do not like to think of [Hebrews 11](#) as a record of heroes of faith because that puts the emphasis on humanity. I like to put the emphasis upon faith. The men and women recorded there illustrate what faith did in all ages under all circumstances in their lives. For us it means that faith can do the same thing for us, seeing "we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses" ([Heb. 12:1](#)).

Another startling fact is that Rahab is in the genealogy of Christ! The New Testament opens with that genealogy, and you don't read five verses of the New Testament until you come to this woman's name. How did she get into the genealogy of Christ? She got there by faith.

As you can see, the chapter before us introduces a remarkable woman.

And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there
[\[Josh. 2:1\]](#).

Notice that two spies are sent in. You may be thinking that this is another mistake. Earlier they had sent the spies to see if they could take the land. Now they are being sent, not to see if they can take the land, but to find the best way to enter the land. The purpose is entirely different, you see.

Rahab, a citizen of Jericho, opens her home to the spies.

And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to-night of the children of Israel to search out the country.

And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.

And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were:

And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.

But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.

And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate [[Josh. 2:2-7](#)].

She told her king an outright lie to protect these men. And in doing so, she actually jeopardized her own life. Now why would she put her life on the line like this? She didn't have to. She is in a business, by the way, where anything goes. Why did she lie to her own people and protect the enemy?

Before we see the answer to that question, let me raise another question. Is it possible to condone Rahab's action? Scripture is very clear on the fact that we, as children of God, are to obey authority and those that have the rule over us. Rahab certainly did not do that. I do not think we could call her a child of God until sometime after this experience. That would be one explanation. However, there is another explanation that I consider meaningful to us today.

A believer should certainly obey the authorities and those who have rule over us. A Christian should be the most law-abiding citizen in the land. But when the laws of a state conflict with God's revealed will, then the Christian has no choice but to obey the command of God. This was the experience of Peter and John when the authorities attempted to silence them in their witness for Christ, ". . . Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" ([Acts 4:19-20](#)). The believer is to obey the Word of God today rather than the word of man. That should be our attitude as children of God.

Now we will let Rahab answer our first question: why did she lie to protect the enemy?

And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;

And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you [[Josh. 2:8-9](#)].

She gives an insight into the thinking of the Canaanites at that time. The word is out that a great company of people is coming into that land. They believe they are going to take the land. The population is stirred up, and they are afraid. This is the report that Rahab gives the spies. I guess she was in a position to get all the gossip, and she could see that all of her people were terrified because of Israel's advance.

For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed [[Josh. 2:10](#)].

Notice: "We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you." How long ago was this? That happened forty years before they arrived at the Jordan River! During those forty years God had been giving the people of Canaan an opportunity to turn to Him. How do we know that? Because God had said to Abraham that his seed would be strangers in a foreign land for 400 years; then in the fourth generation they would come again because "... the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" ([Gen. 15:16](#)). That was 420 years before this. In other words, God was going to give the people of Canaan 420 years to decide whether or not they would turn to Him.

The critic declares that the God of the Old Testament was a great big bully, that He was cruel and barbaric. When God gave the people of Canaan 420 years to repent, in my opinion, that is long enough. But God extended the time by forty more years and saw to it that they heard how He had revealed Himself by delivering His people from Egypt. God did not destroy a people that had not heard about Him. He gave them ample opportunity to turn to Him. My question, Mr. Critic, is -- how much longer do you think God should have given them?

In the New Testament God has not changed. He has made it very clear that those who reject Jesus Christ are going to hell. Does it shock you to hear that in this very "civilized" society that discounts the existence of hell? When God's judgment falls, I am sure there will be some soft-hearted and soft-headed folk on the sideline who will say, "He should have given them more time." More time? My friend, over 1900 years have gone by. God is patient; He is slow to anger; He is merciful. How much longer do you want Him to give us? He has been giving the world ample opportunity to turn to Christ.

The harlot said, "We have heard." And notice the reaction.

And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath [[Josh. 2:11](#)].

Not only did they hear this, but they knew it was true. Even so, they did not turn to God.

There are a great many people today who know as a historical fact that Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose again, but they are not saved. What saves you? It is trusting Him as your personal Savior. It is to have a personal relationship with Him.

Now that's not all Rahab said.

Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee [[Josh. 2:12-14](#)].

She not only believed, but she is acting on that belief. This is her reason for putting her life in jeopardy to protect enemy spies. She heard; she believed; then she acted upon her belief.

This is salvation, friend. When you hear the gospel, the good news of what Christ has done for you, you must not only believe it as a historical fact, you must trust Christ yourself.

So this woman trusted the fact that God was going to give them that land. She turned to the living and true God. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace" ([Heb. 11:31](#)).

The spies promise to spare all of her family that is with her in the house when Jericho is attacked.

Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee [[Josh. 2:18](#)].

And if the king of the city of Jericho had turned to God, he would have been saved. In fact, the whole city could have been spared if they had believed in God.

Now we will look at the final verses of this chapter, the report of the spies.

So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them:

And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us [[Josh. 2:23-24](#)].

You see, the spies' report is entirely different from the spies who went into the land forty years earlier. It is not a question now whether or not they will go into the land. They are

going in. "All the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us" is the information they got from Rahab the harlot.

Chapter 3

THEME: Crossing the Jordan River

Crossing the Jordan River into the land of Canaan was a major turning point as far as the faith of the Israelites was concerned. Almost forty years earlier the children of Israel had faced a similar crisis, but they had failed. To slip away into the wilderness of Sinai by crossing the Red Sea required some faith. However, to invade the land of Canaan by crossing the Jordan River took a great deal more faith because, having once crossed the river, there would be no possibility of escape. Once in the land, they would have to face the enemy with their armies, chariots, and walled cities. The entire nation took this step together in complete commitment to God.

And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.

And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host;

And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.

Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore [[Josh. 3:1-4](#)].

God commanded Joshua and the children of Israel to cross over the Jordan River. When they went over the Jordan River, it was quite different from their crossing the Red Sea. When they crossed the Red Sea, Moses went down to the water and smote it with his rod. All that night the waters rolled back. But when they crossed the Jordan River, it was actually a greater miracle, for it was at flood stage and their crossing caused a holding back of the waters that were rushing to the Dead Sea.

Also something new has been added. The ark is to go down far ahead of the people, three thousand feet, which is almost a mile; and it is to be carried by priests who are to come to the edge of the Jordan River and stand there.

And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,) [[Josh. 3:15](#)].

When the priests came to the edge of the Jordan River, the flow of water was restrained as if a dam had been put over it. The waters that were this side of it passed on down, and before long there was a dry passage. This is one of the greatest miracles recorded in Scripture.

This was the spring of the year. That land had two rainy seasons: in the fall and in the spring. The spring rains were most abundant. The Jordan was at flood stage. It is entirely possible that the people on the west side of Jordan felt that they had several days, or maybe several weeks, before the Israelites could get across the river. They probably felt that there was no immediate danger. Some of them, however, may have had a lurking fear, knowing that forty years earlier these people had crossed the Red Sea.

That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.

And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan [[Josh. 3:16-17](#)].

Note that the priests moved to the center of the Jordan River and stood there holding the ark until all of the children of Israel had passed over. The Israelites crossed the river at Jericho, but the waters were dammed up way back to the city of Adam. Now I have never been able to locate the city of Adam. What is the meaning of this city? Well, friend, it is the city we all came from in the sense that Adam is the father of the human family and by Adam came death. What was taking place at the Jordan River represented the death and resurrection of Christ and His work on the cross. It not only reached forward over 1,900 years to where you and I are, but it also reached back to Adam and the beginning of the human family. That is the picture we have here.

Now the ark is one of the finest types of the Lord Jesus Christ given in the Old Testament, although there are several that are conspicuous and outstanding. The ark had been in the very heart of Israel's camp for forty years during the wilderness march. Every night when they came into camp, the entire twelve tribes of Israel camped about the ark. It was the very center. But now, for the first time, that which speaks of Christ goes ahead to the Jordan River and enters it first.

As has already been stated, Christ goes before us in death. Of course He goes with us in life -- as we pass through this world, He is with us. But He went before us in death; and when our Lord entered death, He entered it for you and for me.

Chapter 4

THEME: Construction of two memorials

Twelve men are appointed to take twelve stones out of the Jordan River, and twelve other stones are set up in the midst of the Jordan River as a memorial. The priests carrying the ark pass over the river, and the water of the river returns to its normal flow. God magnifies Joshua.

And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,

Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man,
And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night [[Josh. 4:1-3](#)].

This is something that they did. And here is what happened.

And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there [[Josh. 4:8](#)].

The twelve stones taken out of Jordan and put on the west bank of the river were a reminder of God's tremendous power on Israel's behalf.

And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day [[Josh. 4:9](#)].

That is, the stones were there when Joshua wrote this record.

Now this section has great spiritual significance for us today. In an attempt to get the full significance of this, I am quoting from Phillips' book (which is not a translation, but is an interpretation), [Romans 6:1-4](#): "Now what is our response to be? Shall we sin to our heart's content and see how far we can exploit the grace of God? What a ghastly thought! We, who have died to sin -- how could we live in sin a moment longer?" Now when did we die to sin? "Have you forgotten that all of us who were baptized into Jesus Christ were, by that very action, sharing in his death? We were dead and buried with him in baptism, so that just as he was raised from the dead by the splendid revelation of the Father's power so we too might rise to life on a new plane altogether." My friend, may I say to you that Christ went unto death for you and me, and that is set before us here in the Book of Joshua. Twelve stones were put into the water of death. Those twelve stones were placed in Jordan to speak of the death of Christ. And the twelve stones taken out of Jordan and put on the west bank represent the resurrection of Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ died over 1,900 years ago, and Paul makes it clear in the sixth chapter of Romans that we are identified with Him in His death. It is too bad that the word baptize was transliterated and not translated. It is a Greek word baptizo, and its primary meaning here has no connection with water. It speaks of identification. We are identified with Christ in His death; and when He died, my friend, He died for us. His death was our death. When He arose from the dead, then we arose from the dead. And we are joined today to a living Christ. It is only in the measure that we are joined to Him that you and I can enjoy all spiritual blessings. I trust that you realize that. We have become identified with Him!

Now, when the children of Israel crossed over the river, they became citizens of Palestine. They became forever identified with that land -- so much so, that today, even at this hour, they speak of the Jew in Palestine. And when he is out of that land, he is

spoken of as the "wandering Jew." Let us tie this fact up with another great fact: When you, my friend, came to Christ and accepted Him as your Savior, His death became your death and His resurrection your resurrection. When you "wander" from this identity, even briefly, think of the tragic meaning.

Paul wrote a blessed truth to the Ephesians: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" ([Eph. 2:4-7](#)). When He died, He died for your sin that you might have life; and when He came back from the dead, His life was then your life. Now you are joined to the living God. My friend, that is one of the great truths of the Word of God.

And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.

And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.

And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?

Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land [[Josh. 4:19-22](#)].

If we carry the spiritual lesson out in this passage, our conclusion can only be that we are to teach our children the gospel. The business of parents is to give their children the gospel. There is no privilege like that of a parent leading his child to a saving knowledge of Christ. My wife had the privilege of leading our daughter to the Lord. This is the responsibility of parents.

For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over:

That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever [[Josh. 4:23-24](#)].

What God did for the children of Israel He did for their benefit, your benefit, and mine. He did it that all the people of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is indeed mighty. This purpose was graphically fulfilled as soon as the Canaanites heard the news that the children of Israel had crossed over Jordan.

Some of the important things to remember in this chapter are that the ark goes before and divides the Jordan River -- not the rod of Moses. The ark goes before, carried by priests. Christ goes before us through death but also goes with us through this life. Jordan is typical of Christ's death, not ours.

Chapter 5

THEME: Fear falls upon the Amorites; a new generation is circumcised; the divine visitor -- captain of the host

In this chapter we learn that the rite of circumcision was performed; the manna ceased and they began to eat the old corn of the land; finally, Joshua was confronted by the unseen Captain of the "host of the LORD" -- Joshua needed this vision at this time. These three things are important to see.

Fear Falls Upon The Amorites (5:1)

And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel [[Josh. 5:1](#)].

Because the Jordan River was at flood stage, the Amorites and Canaanites did not expect the Israelites to cross over. They expected them to cross over after the flood season was over. They probably thought they had quite a bit more time to prepare for battle, and it was a shock for them to discover that God had enabled Israel to cross Jordan.

A New Generation Is Circumcised (5:2-12)

At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.

And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.

And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt.

Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised [[Josh. 5:2-5](#)].

The new generation had neglected the rite of circumcision, which was the badge of the Abrahamic covenant. The Abrahamic covenant, you remember, gave Israel the land of Canaan. They had neglected to observe this rite during those years of wandering through the wilderness.

For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD swore that he would not show them the land, which the LORD swore unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.

And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole.

And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day [[Josh. 5:6-9](#)].

Both in spirit and in reality the children of Israel had not kept the rite of circumcision, which was the sign of the Abrahamic covenant. The children of Israel had walked forty years in the wilderness until all of the men that had come out of Egypt, who were men of war, had died. The Lord had given them children, and they are the ones whom Joshua circumcised. At this time, God rolled away the reproach of Egypt. The "reproach of Egypt" means that during the latter years of the Egyptian bondage this rite had been neglected, and the neglect had continued during the wilderness wanderings. Therefore, the place where Joshua circumcised the children of Israel was called Gilgal, which means "a rolling."

And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho [[Josh. 5:10](#)].

It was in the spring of the year, at the time of the latter rains, that Israel performed the rite of circumcision and then celebrated the Passover. The reproach of Egypt was rolled away from Israel. God had promised to give the descendants of Abraham the land, and the promise was about to become a reality.

All of this has a spiritual message for us today. The old nature is no good. The old nature cannot inherit spiritual blessing. The old nature cannot even enjoy spiritual blessing. The old nature will not like Canaan, nor anything in the heavenlies. In [Galatians 5:17](#) Paul says, "For the flesh lusteth [which is literally wars] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Paul found that there was no good in the old nature. He also discovered that there was no power in the new nature (see [Rom. 7](#)). The circumcision of the children of Israel recognized these facts.

And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.

And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year [[Josh. 5:11-12](#)].

Manna was a picture of Christ we are told in the New Testament. Jesus said, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" ([John 6:49-51](#)).

Manna represents Christ in His death. He is the One who came down to this earth "to give his life a ransom for many."

When Israel arrived in Canaan, the manna ceased, and they began to eat the old corn of the land.

The Divine Visitor -- Captain Of The Host (5:13-15)

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?

And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?

And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so [[Josh. 5:13-15](#)].

This is the call and commission of Joshua. It is the same as Moses' call on the plain of Midian at the burning bush. Moses was told to remove his shoes, for the ground upon which he stood was holy ([Exod. 3:5](#)). The children of Israel had crossed the Jordan River and were camped on the other side. One morning Joshua probably got up and looked over the scene. It was an impressive sight. There were the camps of all twelve tribes of Israel around him. As he looked at it, I think he swelled with a little pride. He was the one in charge, and GHQ was in his tent now. Then he happened to look down at the edge of the camp, and he saw someone with a drawn sword. Joshua may have thought, There is someone down there who doesn't seem to know that I am the general here. I'd better go down there and put that fellow in his place! So he walked down there and, according to our translation, said, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" Now in good old Americana he said, "What's the big idea? Who gave you an order to draw a sword?" Then that One, whom I believe was the pre-incarnate Christ, turned to him, and when He turned, He said, "Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come!" Notice the reaction of Joshua. He fell on his face before Him.

You see, Joshua learned that GHQ was not in his tent after all. It was at the throne of God. God was leading them. Actually, he was not captain of the hosts of the Lord; he was under Someone else. And he would be taking orders from Him. We shall be seeing this in the next chapter as he marches the army around the city of Jericho for seven straight days. If you had stopped Joshua on the sixth day and said, "Look, General Joshua, this is a silly thing to be doing," he probably would have said, "That's exactly what I think." "Then why are you doing it? You are in command here." Joshua would say, "You are wrong. I take my orders from Someone above me. I am only a buck private in the rear ranks. I am doing this because I have been commanded to do it."

Chapter 6

THEME: Conquest of Jericho

Now that we have come to the actual conquest of the Promised Land, let's look again at the events that led up to it.

The children of Israel have now crossed the Jordan River in a most remarkable manner, and they have entered the land. The Jordan is a quiet little stream in the summertime, but it is a rushing torrent during the rainy seasons. As you recall, the ark of the Lord, carried by the priests, went before them. The ark, of course, represents the presence of Christ. When the feet of the priests reached the Jordan, the waters rolled back; then they stood in the midst of the river, with the ark on their shoulders, while all the people passed over Jordan and the memorial stones were set up.

Now the people of Israel are camped on the west side of the bank of the Jordan River. What a glorious, wonderful anticipation awaits them! This is the land God had promised to give them, a land of milk and honey. It is the land they have been told to possess. Obviously, their hearts are thrilled with it. Surges of anticipation and joy go through them.

They have been conditioned for conquest by circumcision, which was the token of the covenant God made with Abraham. Part of that covenant was that they were to have that land. You recall that Joshua made sharp knives for the circumcision.

What application does this have to your life and mine? To me the sharp knives speak of the Word of God, which ". . . is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword . . ." ([Heb. 4:12](#)). It is able to divide. In our country today all the morality lines are rubbed out, but there is still black and white in the Word of God. We need to get back to Bible morality, because there is no blessing to this nation or any people until they come back to the Word of God.

Another conditioning for conquest had been the vision of the Captain of the hosts of the Lord. General Joshua is going to take orders from above.

Now the first step of conquest is Jericho, and we see that the tactic is to divide the land. By taking the cities of Jericho and Ai, the center of the land will be theirs; then they will move into the south. This method of dividing the land is a method that was followed, it seems, by great generals from that day to this. They divide the enemy, then take them piecemeal. It was used in the Civil War, in World War I, and in World War II. However, the method for taking Jericho would not be used again. Let's look at it.

Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel:
none went out, and none came in [[Josh. 6:1](#)].

Jericho was prepared for the attack of the Israelites. They did not think the Israelites would arrive as quickly as they did, but they shut up the city and prepared for attack.

And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand
Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.

And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round
about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him [[Josh. 6:2-5](#)].

The day comes for the beginning of the campaign. Joshua follows the Lord's instructions exactly.

And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.

And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.

So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp [[Josh. 6:8-11](#)].

The city of Jericho is prepared. Undoubtedly there are soldiers on the wall and watchmen at the gate. The military brass and its staff are in the city getting reports from the wall. Finally the word comes, "Here comes the enemy." Joshua and the army of Israel are marching toward the city. In front of the procession is the ark carried by the priests, and the priests carry horns. A watchman on the wall cries, "Here they come. Let's get ready. They apparently are going to attack at the gate!" So the forces of Jericho gather at the gate. They are ready for battle if the gate is broken down.

Then a strange thing happens. The watchman calls down, "They're not going to attack here. They made a turn and they are going to attack at another place!" So the army on the inside shifts, and I think they march around on the inside. They are informed by those on the wall, "They are here . . . they are here . . . they are here." The Israelites go all the way around, and instead of attacking, they go back into camp! You can be sure of one thing: there is a huddle that night of the king and the military brass.

And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.

And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days [[Josh. 6:12-14](#)].

The next day the Israelites give a repeat performance. The watchman on the wall cries out, "Here they come again." Then the Israelites march around the wall and go back to camp. Each day for six days they do the same thing. By the sixth day, the midnight oil had burned long and late in the Pentagon inside Jericho. The army on the outside was tired of marching around the wall. Maybe some of the children of Israel were saying, "What we are doing looks foolish!" If you had asked Joshua why he was doing this, he probably would have replied, "I take my orders from the Captain of the hosts of the Lord. This is what He has told me to do and I am doing it."

And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times [[Josh. 6:15](#)].

So on the seventh day the Israelites march around the wall again. The people of Jericho heave a sigh of relief when they get clear around. The army inside the wall has made its circuit, too, and is relieved that it is over for the day. Everyone sits down to rest -- when all of a sudden the watchman says, "Wait a minute, they are going to march around again." So the Israelites make the circuit again. They do it a third and a fourth time. . . .

And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.

So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city [[Josh. 6:16,20](#)].

The walls of Jericho fell down flat. I had the privilege of going to Jericho with a very special Arab guide who had worked with both John Garstang and Kathleen Kenyon; they had led archaeological expeditions in unearthing the ancient city of Jericho. Garstang and Kenyon disagreed as to the dates of the wall. But it had fallen down and was flat -- that was obvious. Since this Arab guide had worked with both expeditions, I asked him what he thought as to the date of ancient Jericho. He went along with Garstang, and his reasoning was that when Garstang got there, he was probably not as scientific and didn't do quite the job that Kenyon did. Because he disturbed everything, it would be impossible for anyone coming later to arrive at an accurate estimation. Well, I'll let them argue that. All I'm interested in is that the Word of God says the walls fell down flat -- and the evidence is there today. The faith of the believer does not rest upon the shovel of the archaeologist. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" ([Heb. 11:30](#)).

Jericho represents the world to the believer. It is strong and formidable and foreboding -- the conquest depends upon faith: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" ([1John 5:4](#)). [Hebrews 11](#)

reveals how faith worked in all ages in the lives of God's choicest servants as they met the world head-on and overcame by faith.

We hear the song, "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho." The question is -- did he? No, he did not. He didn't fight at all. He just marched around the city. Who did the fighting? God did that, friend, and I think any other explanation is ridiculous. Some say that an earthquake took place at that psychological moment when the priests blew the trumpets and all the people shouted, and the shock toppled the walls. Others say that the constant marching of the children of Israel around the wall loosened the wall and it fell down. Well, you can believe that if you want to. I like it the way it is told in the Word of God. God got the victory; Israel got the possession.

A great problem that many believers have today is that they are trying to "fit the battle of Jericho" and overcome the world. But you and I need to start taking orders from the Captain up yonder, the Captain of our salvation.

Now notice two more things briefly. The first is that Rahab was spared.

But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her.

And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel.

And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho [[Josh. 6:22-23,25](#)].

True to their promise, they saved Rahab and all her family that was with her in the house.

Note also that Joshua pronounced a curse on anyone who would rebuild that city.

And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it [[Josh. 6:26](#)].

We will see when we study [1Kings 16](#) that Jericho was rebuilt. And the curse came upon the man who rebuilt it and upon his son.

Before we leave this chapter, notice the explicit command of God, as relayed by Joshua, was that nothing was to be salvaged in the city but the silver, gold, vessels of bronze and iron, which were to be placed in the treasury of the Lord. No soldier was to take anything for himself.

And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it [[Josh. 6:18](#)].

We will see in the next chapter that somebody snitched at the battle of Jericho.

Chapter 7

THEME: Defeat at Ai

The worst enemy that you have is yourself. He occupies the same skin that you occupy. He uses the same brain that you use in thinking his destructive thoughts. He uses the same hands that you use to perform his own deeds. This enemy can do you more harm than anyone else. He is the greatest handicap that you have in your daily Christian life.

There are two factors that make dealing with this enemy doubly difficult. In the first place, we are reluctant to recognize and identify him. We are loath to label him as an enemy. The fact of the matter is most of us rather like him. The second problem is that he is on the inside of us. If he would only come out and fight like a man, it would be different, but he will not. It is not because he is a coward, but because he can fight better from his position within.

Nations, cities, churches, and individuals have been destroyed by the enemy within. Russia fell to the Communists, not because of the German pressure on the outside, but because of this doctrine fomenting on the inside.

There comes out of ancient history an authentic narrative, long held in the category of mythology, that the city of Troy held off the Greeks for ten long, weary years. Finally the Greeks sailed away leaving a wooden horse. The Trojans took that wooden horse within their gates, and that was the undoing and destruction of Troy.

In a similar way churches are wrecked from within, not from forces without. The Lord Jesus Christ, in letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor, gave them certain warnings; yet not one of these churches received warning as to the enemy on the outside. He said: ". . . Thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam. . . . So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner" ([Rev. 2:14-15](#) ASV). Also He warned: "But I have this against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols" ([Rev. 2:20](#) ASV). Christ said to these churches (in effect), "You have something within that is bringing about your own destruction." Disloyalty and unfaithfulness in the church today is hurting God's cause more than any enemy that is on the outside. The devil can only hurt our churches from the inside, not from the outside.

Also, my friend, an individual can be destroyed from the inside. Alexander the Great was probably the greatest military genius who has moved armies across the pages of history. There has been no one like him. Before the age of thirty-five he had conquered the world, but he died a drunkard. He had conquered the world, but he could not conquer Alexander the Great. There was an enemy within that destroyed him.

The only battle that the children of Israel lost in taking the Promised Land was a battle in which the defeat came, not from without, but from within. When the children of Israel entered the Promised Land, not many enemies, but three conspicuous and outstanding

ones stood in their way. They were Jericho, Ai, and the Gibeonites. These three enemies of Israel prevented Israel's enjoyment and possession of the Promised Land. The land was there. God had told them that it was theirs. God had given them the title deed in His promise to Abraham. To Joshua He had said, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it, as I spake unto Moses" ([Josh. 1:3](#) ASV). God was saying to them, "It is yours, go in, possess, and enjoy that which you take."

What a lesson that is for us today. These people were given a land that was made up of three hundred thousand square miles, and even in their best days they occupied only thirty thousand square miles. Christians have been given all spiritual blessings. But how many of them, Christian, are you enjoying today? How many of them are really yours? You have the title to them, but have you claimed them and are you enjoying them as He intended? Think of the many Christians who are blessed with all spiritual blessings and yet are living as if they are spiritual paupers. God has made them available to us but, if we are to get them, there are battles to be fought and victories to be won. In fact, the Epistle to the Ephesians closes with the clanking of armor and the sound of battle, with the call to put on the whole armor of God.

In [Joshua 7](#) and 8, defeat and victory at Ai represent the flesh in the believer. The sin of Achan was sin in the camp. Steps in sins of flesh are: I saw -- physical; I coveted -- mental; I took -- volitional. There will be no deliverance until sin is dealt with in the life of a believer.

Now let us look at the text.

But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel [[Josh. 7:1](#)].

This verse tells us that the children of Israel committed a trespass, but it was one man, Achan, who committed the sin. The whole nation had to suffer because of what Achan did. This is interesting because many people stand on the outside and criticize the church. They talk about the failure of the church and its apostasy. I do some of this myself. But, my friend, talking about the church as a member is one thing, and standing on the outside doing nothing is quite another. If the church is failing and is in a state of apostasy (and it is), then you and I are implicated in it as members of the church. If one member suffers, then all members suffer. "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" ([1Cor. 12:26](#)).

And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Beth-el, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few [[Josh. 7:2-3](#)].

Jericho represented the world; Ai represents the flesh. Some saints are marching around Jericho, blowing trumpets as they talk about being separated Christians. But they are as negative as anyone could be as they declare, "We don't do this, and we don't do that." In fact, they do a spiritual strip-tease -- they put off everything that seems to them to be worldly. They have overcome the world. But what about the flesh, friends? Some of the most dangerous people in the church are the super-duper saints who talk about having overcome the world, but they are defeated at Ai. Some of them have the meanest tongues imaginable. I was a pastor for forty years, and I could tell you story after story about the antics of the super-duper saints. The flesh has many people in tow. They think they are living the Christian life. In fact, they talk about living the victorious life, yet they do not even know what it is. The victorious life is His life. He is the One who gets the victory and not us.

The children of Israel were in the flush of victory. They had overcome Jericho. Although it was God's victory, in a short time Israel thought of it as their victory. Joshua sent some of his men to look at Ai. After looking the city over carefully, they said, "Ai is nothing compared to Jericho." When I was in that land, I looked at it through binoculars -- we didn't even go up to it. It is a little old place and doesn't amount to much.

So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men:
and they fled before the men of Ai.

And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for
they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and
smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people
melted, and became as water [[Josh. 7:4-5](#)].

Israel was defeated by the men of Ai. You and I are defeated by the flesh. We cannot use the same tactics to overcome the flesh as we use to overcome the world. The Israelites did not recognize their weakness. The apostle Paul recognized his weakness when he said, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" ([Rom. 7:18](#)). Have you found out, my Christian friend, that you have no strength or power within yourself? You cannot live the Christian life, and God never asks you to. God wants to live the Christian life through you. In [Romans 7](#) Paul discovered that there was no good thing in his old nature. He also found out that there was no power in his new nature. The new nature wants to live for God but does not have the power to do it. In [Romans 8](#) we are introduced to the Holy Spirit of God. It is only when we are filled with the Holy Spirit of God that we can live the Christian life.

And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face
before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of
Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all
brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the
Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and
dwelt on the other side Jordan! [[Josh. 7:6-7](#)].

We have heard this song before. Joshua is singing the blues. He learned the lyrics in the wilderness with the children of Israel. Joshua did not sing this song in the wilderness, but

he is singing now. He cannot understand why he lost the battle. So he tears his clothes and cries out:

O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name? [[Josh. 7:8-9](#)].

Listen to what the Lord said. It is getting right down to the nitty-gritty.

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? [[Josh. 7:10](#)].

He says to Joshua, "Get up off your face, and cut out all this whining in sackcloth and ashes." There are Christians who spend their prayer time whining before the Lord. It won't do any good, friend. We need to get at the root of the problem.

Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff [[Josh. 7:11](#)].

Joshua did not know that Israel had sinned. He did not have the spiritual discernment that was in the early church. When Ananias and Sapphira lied about their property in [Acts 5](#), the Holy Spirit brought it out immediately. The early church was sensitive to sin.

God told Joshua that sin was in the camp and he would have to deal with it.

In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man [[Josh. 7:14](#)].

The tribe of Judah and the family of the Zarhites were found to be guilty.

And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken [[Josh. 7:18](#)].

Israel had to go through this long procedure in order to find the guilty party. It was difficult for them to distinguish evil in the camp. For us, also, it seems to be difficult to distinguish evil in the church. Church members seem to be the most blind to evil in their own communities. They can see evil in a night club downtown or in a liquor store or in some politician, but they cannot see sin in their family or church. How tragic that is.

And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it [[Josh. 7:19-21](#)].

Notice the steps of Achan's sin. He saw, he coveted, he took. These are the steps of the sin of the flesh. Gossip, criticism, envy, and jealousy are all sins of the flesh. They cause strife and trouble. For instance, criticism builds up your ego. It calls attention to yourself. It makes you look better than the person you are criticizing. The old sin of the flesh sees, covets, and then takes.

Now what does Achan do when he is confronted? He confesses. He lays it right out. For believers today, how are we going to overcome the flesh? We have to deal with sin in our lives.

You remember that the way we overcome the world is by faith. But that isn't the way we overcome the flesh. We want to have fellowship with God; we want to be filled by the Holy Spirit that we might serve Him. Now how are we going to have fellowship with Him? How are we going to have power in our lives? John's first epistle makes it clear the way we can't do it: ". . . God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" ([1John 1:5-6](#)). If you say you are having fellowship with Him and are living in sin, you are not kidding anybody. You certainly are not having fellowship with Him, and you know it. Now suppose we say we have no sin. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" ([1John 1:8](#)). But what are we to do? "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" ([1John 1:9](#)). You see, you cannot bring God down to your level. And friend, you cannot bring yourself up to God's level. The thing to do is to keep the communication open between you and God. And the only way you can do it is by confessing your sin. John adds, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" ([1John 1:10](#)). That is strong language, friend. God says if we say we have no sin we are lying. And I believe He is accurate. But what do we do about it? We are to confess our sins.

How are we to do that? True confession does not deal in generalities. Spell it out as Achan did: "I saw them; I coveted them; I took them." Tell God everything that is in your heart -- just open it up to Him. You might as well tell Him because He already knows all about it.

Mel Trotter told about a man on the board of his Pacific Garden Mission, a doctor, who, when he prayed would say, "Lord, if I have sinned, forgive my sins." Mel Trotter got tired of listening to that. Finally he went to the doctor and said to him, "Listen, Doc, you say, 'If I have sinned.' Don't you know whether or not you have sinned?" The doctor said, "Well, I guess I do." "Don't you know what your sin is?" "No," the doctor said, "I don't know what it is." Mel Trotter said, "If you don't know, then guess at it!" The next time the doctor prayed, Mel said, he guessed it the first time! It is amazing, friends, the way we beat around the bush even in our praying. Just go to God and tell Him exactly what

your sin is. That is confession. There can be no joy in your life; there can be no power in your life; there can be no victory in your life until there is confession of sin.

And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day [[Josh. 7:25-26](#)].

This is a serious situation, and it is emphasized for believers in the New Testament. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" ([Rom. 8:13](#)). There are many Christians who are not living. Dwight L. Moody put it in this quaint way, "People have just enough religion to make them miserable." There are miserable saints because they do not deal with the sin in their lives. The apostle Paul said, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" ([1Cor. 11:31-32](#)). If we don't judge ourselves, God has to step in and judge us, and His judgment is sometimes pretty serious. I can tell you from experience what the judgment of God is in my own life. And it will do no good to complain and whine like Joshua did. The thing to do is to go to God and get the miserable thing straightened out. When we confess our sin to Him and turn from it, then we experience the joy of the Lord.

Chapter 8

THEME: Victory at Ai; Joshua reads the blessings and cursings

As we have seen in chapter 7, Israel suffered an ignoble defeat at the little city of Ai, and the reason for the defeat was sin in the camp. Now the sin has been dealt with, and God is prepared to give Israel the victory.

Victory At Ai (8:1-7)

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land [[Josh. 8:1](#)].

Notice that God says to take all the men of war when they go against Ai. As we have said, Ai represents the flesh. The flesh is the greatest enemy you have, and you need all the resources you have to get the victory.

And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it [[Josh. 8:2](#)].

You will recall that at the battle of Jericho they were not to take any of the prey or the spoil for themselves. But here God tells them to take what they want. Why the

difference? Well, we now know that in Jericho social diseases were running rampant. Joshua didn't know about disease germs, but God did.

Note that God tells Joshua to take Ai by ambush.

So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai:
and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and
sent them away by night.

And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait
against the city, even behind the city: go not very far from the
city, but be ye all ready:

And I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the
city: and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as
at the first, that we will flee before them,

(For they will come out after us) till we have drawn them from the
city; for they will say, They flee before us, as at the first: therefore
we will flee before them.

Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for
the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand [[Josh. 8:3-7](#)].

As we read on, we see that the strategy worked just as Joshua planned, and the city of Ai fell easily into the hands of Israel.

Because Ai represents the flesh, we learn from this episode great spiritual lessons. First of all there must be a recognition of the enemy and his potential. We must realize that the greatest enemy you and I have is ourselves. I hear folk saying, "The devil made me do it." Well, he didn't. It is that flesh of yours which is responsible.

Second, we must examine very carefully the reasons for our defeats. Primarily the reason for defeat is our dependence upon our own ability. You remember that the spies said to Joshua, "You will need only about two or three thousand men to overcome little Ai." And we think the flesh will be easy to overcome. We depend on ourselves to do it. We will have to come to the same place to which Paul came when he cried, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" ([Rom. 7:24](#)).

My friend, you and I cannot control the flesh. Only the Spirit of God can do that. The tragedy is that thousands are trying to control and eradicate it in their own strength. You might as well take a gallon of French perfume out to the barnyard, pour it on a pile of manure, and expect to make it into a sand pile in which your children might play. You cannot improve and control this thing we know as the flesh or the sin nature. God says you cannot. Only the Holy Spirit can control it.

Christ died not only that you might have salvation, but He died that this sin nature might be dealt with. ". . . God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" ([Rom. 8:3](#)). This simply means that when Christ came to this earth, He not only died for your sins that you might have salvation, but He died to bring into judgment this old sin nature. Otherwise God could not touch us with a forty-foot pole, because we are evil. Christ died because I have a sin nature and you have a sin

nature. The Holy Spirit could not touch us until Christ had paid that penalty. When the penalty was paid, and our sin nature was condemned, then the Holy Spirit could and did come into our lives and bring victory out of defeat. As Paul expressed it, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" ([Gal. 2:20](#)). The flesh, like Ai, will defeat us unless we are depending upon the power of the Holy Spirit to win the victory.

Joshua Reads The Blessings And Cursings (8:30-35)

Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal,

As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings.

And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel [[Josh. 8:30-32](#)].

We find that after the victory at Ai, Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal. Then the Israelites did what Moses had commanded, and Joshua read the blessings and cursings (see [Deut. 11:26-32](#)).

And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them [[Josh. 8:34-35](#)].

Note that the entire Law of Moses was read. They did not read just a part of it; they read all of it. This was to be the law of the land, and it was time for Israel to be reminded of the conditions of God's covenant with her.

Chapter 9

THEME: Compact with the Gibeonites

As Joshua began the conquest of the Promised Land, he faced three formidable enemies: Jericho, Ai, and the Gibeonites. These three enemies of Joshua represent the enemies of the Christian today. Jericho represents the world; Ai represents the flesh; and the Gibeonites represent the devil.

You will recall that Joshua's strategy was to first take Jericho, located right in the center of the land, then to take Ai which stood northeast of Jericho. To the south was an alliance of Gibeonites. Apparently they were next in the line of conquest. But the Gibeonites were clever, as we shall see.

And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof;

That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord [[Josh. 9:1-2](#)].

Undoubtedly these kings had planned to unite against the Israelites, but it seems that for some reason they failed to come together, and they did not succeed in stopping the invading army of Israel. This may explain the defection of the Gibeonites. Their thought was not to fight but to make a compact.

And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai,

They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up;

And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy.

And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.

And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?

And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye?

And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt [[Josh. 9:3-9](#)].

The Gibeonites were very clever, and they were a bunch of liars. They pretended to be envoys from a far country when, in fact, they lived only a few miles from Jerusalem. They told Joshua that they really wanted to worship the living and true God. Then they called Joshua's attention -- if it hadn't been noticed -- to their old sacks and wineskins, their old shoes and threadbare clothing, and their moldy bread. It was all a hoax, but Joshua fell for it. God had ordered the Israelites to completely wipe out the people of the land and to make no treaties with them. Although it was Joshua's intent to obey God, he was deceived into making peace with the Gibeonites and actually making a league with them. Notice that neither Joshua nor the men of Israel asked the mind of God before entering into this alliance.

As you recall, Jericho represents the world. How do you overcome the world? By faith. Ai represents the flesh. How do you overcome the flesh? Not by fighting it, but by recognizing your weakness, confessing to God, and letting the Spirit of God get the victory. Remember that it was God who said, "I'm going to give you Ai."

Now we have the third enemy, the Gibeonites, who represent for us the devil. Since Ephesians in the New Testament corresponds to the Book of Joshua in the Old Testament, we find an important parallel here. "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" ([Eph. 6:11](#)). As the men of Israel should have been beware of the wiles of the Gibeonites, so the believer today should watch for the wiles of the devil. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" ([Eph. 6:12](#)). Our real enemy today is not a flesh and blood enemy, but a spiritual enemy. He is Satan. Yet how many Christians even recognize him today? What does he do? He tries to trick you into following him. I am not sure that he is interested in making a drunkard or a drug addict out of you. I think he is ashamed of that crowd of his in the bars and in the sinful places of the world. He went to church last Sunday, and he will be there next Sunday. He wants to be religious, and he wants you to fall down and worship him. He is clever and many Christians are taken in by him. The devil can pull the wool over our eyes. In [2Corinthians 2:11](#) Paul says, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." Unfortunately, you and I are sometimes ignorant of his devices.

Now how do we overcome this enemy? [James 4:7](#) says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." My friend, we need to submit ourselves to God -- that's the first thing. Oh, how we need to stay close to Him in this day in which we live! Satan is out to deceive us as believers. He works wilily. Frankly, I am amazed at the stupidity of the saints today. They are taken in by every ruse imaginable. Do you know why religious rackets are flourishing? It is because Christians are supporting them without doing any investigation. We need to resist the devil. We are to have nothing to do with that about which we are not well informed. There is danger of being linked up with him today, just as the men of Israel in their naivet  became linked up with the Gibeonites.

When Israel discovered that the Gibeonites were neighbors, and had tricked them, they still honored the treaty they had made with them.

But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them.

This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them [[Josh. 9:19-20](#)].

The treaty was honored in that day, although made under these circumstances. Now you may think these folk back here in the Old Testament were uncivilized, but notice that a man's word was very important. And that is the way God wants it today.

And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them.

And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose [[Josh. 9:21,27](#)].

Chapter 10

THEME: Southern campaign: five kings conquered; the sun stood still

In this chapter Joshua conquers five kings of the Amorites, as he continues the campaign in the south. He completes the campaign in the south by the destruction of Makkedah, Lachish, Libnah, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir.

This chapter contains the account of the long day of Joshua. "Did Joshua make the sun stand still?" is a question which is asked by skeptic and saint alike. Following are some explanations of the long day of Joshua which have been proposed:

1. It is the practice of some to avoid giving any interpretation. They ignore it entirely as if it were not worthy of comment.
2. Some treat the language as poetic ([v. 12](#)). This is to adopt a non-literal interpretation which dismisses the miraculous from the incident entirely. Those who hold to this view generally refer to [Judges 5:20](#), ". . . the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." I refuse to dismiss this as poetic because we do not have enough information to state dogmatically that these are poetic statements and not matters of fact. It reminds us of the old bromide that poetic language is sometimes prosaic lying.
3. Some call this a miracle of refraction. The emphasis is placed on [verse 13](#).
4. Some adopt the position that God stopped the entire solar system. They make Joshua's day 23 hours and 20 minutes. The other 40 minutes is found in [2Kings 20:8-11](#), where the sun went ten degrees backward for a sign to Hezekiah that his life would be extended.
5. Some adopt the position that God blacked out the sun rather than continued its shining. The Berkeley Version translates it, "O Sun, wait in Gibeon." In the ASV the marginal reading is, "Sun, be silent." Mauser in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia takes this position. Joshua had made a forced march all night (about forty miles), attacked the enemy from the rear -- came suddenly upon them. It was July -- about 105°F or 120°F in the shade, and there was no shade. Joshua did not want more sun -- he wanted less sun.
6. The best explanation, it seems, is a combination of [numbers 4](#) and [numbers 5](#). Joshua needed more light and less heat. God covered the sun with a storm of hailstones. God slowed down the earth ([v. 12](#)). "Upon Gibeon" indicates that the sun was directly over -- bisecting Gibeon -- and the moon was going down "in the valley of Ajalon." Gibeon is latitude 31 degrees, 51 minutes north.

This is a miracle.

The Miraculous Defense Of Gibeon (10:1-14)

The background for all the action in this chapter is the treaty Joshua made with the Gibeonites. Of course, he should not have made this treaty, but since he did, he felt bound to it.

Now it came to pass, when Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them;

That they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty.

Wherefore Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying,

Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel [[Josh. 10:1-4](#)].

These kings hear of the treaty Gibeon made with Israel, and they come against these Hivites -- for that is what these Gibeonites were -- to destroy them.

Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it [[Josh. 10:5](#)].

So what do these Gibeonites do?

And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp of Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us [[Josh. 10:6](#)].

They send an SOS to Joshua -- come help us quickly!

So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour.

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.

Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night [[Josh. 10:7-9](#)].

Joshua came to their rescue for, I think, two reasons. First, because of the treaty, he felt obligated. Second, after all, he had been told to exterminate the enemy in that land. So his army took out after them. He used the tactic of surprise attack, and the Lord routed them before Israel.

Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel [[Josh. 10:12-14](#)].

We have already discussed the various interpretations of Joshua's long day in the opening remarks of this chapter. According to [Joshua 10:12](#), I believe God stopped the entire solar system to accomplish this miracle. The sun became silent. Joshua wanted more daylight in which to fight; so God stopped the solar system and cut down the heat of the sun by a hailstorm.

God caused the sun to stand still so that Joshua might be victorious in battle. A certain professor once said, "It is ridiculous that God would stop the entire universe for one man." It may sound preposterous to some people, but God did it. He also sent His Son into the world to die for sinners, which was much more wonderful than stopping the sun. When God stopped the sun, He demonstrated His wisdom and power. When He sent His Son into the world to become a man and die on the cross, He displayed His love. If you were the only person that had ever been born, Christ would have died for you. The professor will say that is ridiculous also, and it is. But we have another word for it: grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" ([Eph. 2:8](#)).

Victory At Makkedah (10:15-43)

And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah.

And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah.

And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them:

And stay ye not, but pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them; suffer them not to enter into their cities: for the LORD your God hath delivered them into your hand [[Josh. 10:15-19](#)].

Remember that these kings and their people were given 420 years to make up their minds as to whether or not they would turn to God. Also God had made it known that He was giving the land to Israel and that He would save anyone who would turn to Him. Israel

had to stay out of the land 420 years until the iniquity of the Amorites was full. That time had now come. God brought the children of Israel across the Red Sea not only for their sake, but also to demonstrate His redemption through power, as He had by blood that last night in Egypt when the angel of death passed over the homes on which the blood was on the doorposts. This was not only to convince the Egyptians that there was the living and true God amidst all the idols of Egypt, but also to convince these people in the land. Remember that the harlot Rahab had said, "For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you" ([Josh. 2:10](#)). She believed. Now if that woman believed, anybody could have believed God. However, these folk who are losing their lives did not believe. They had rejected God's mercy, and judgment is coming upon them. Friend, the message has never changed. God loves the world. God loves you and gave His Son. If you will believe on Him, you will not perish. Will you perish if you don't believe? Yes. That is what is happening to these folk. They just don't believe God. Now that may not sound nice to you, and you'd like to have it otherwise, but this is the way it is written in the Word of God.

And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them.

And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight [[Josh. 10:24-25](#)].

This is an impressive array of kings. Forty years prior to this time they caused Israelite spies to say, "We cannot enter the land. We will never be able to take it." Joshua had the captains of his army put their feet upon the necks of these kings to strengthen the heart of these people. They were frightened folk.

There was a whimsical story that came out of World War I when a certain hero, who had captured more German prisoners than any other, was being feted by some society folk in Nashville, Tennessee. One dear talkative dowager asked the hero, "How did you feel when you brought all of those soldiers in?" He replied, "I was scared to death!" This is how the Israelites felt. God wants to encourage them. Then Joshua slew the kings and hanged them on five trees.

And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day [[Josh. 10:27](#)].

The Israelites could have left the kings in the cave and starved them to death. It was more humane to slay them, and they did. They could not turn them loose, and they had no prison in which to put them. Do you think we live in a more civilized day? What do you think about the lawlessness on every hand in our country? We are not in a position to criticize what the Israelites did. They did not have lawlessness, and they settled their problem in the only way they could with a sinful, wicked race. If these kings had been

turned loose, they would have led a rebellion against Joshua that would have caused literally thousands of people to die.

After the kings were hanged, they were taken down from the trees. They were not left hanging overnight. Why? Because we are told, "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance" ([Deut. 21:23](#)). In the New Testament [Galatians 3:13](#) says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Christ was crucified, but they took Him down from the cross because it is written that cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree. He bore the curse of sin for you and me.

And Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon.

And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.

And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal [[Josh. 10:41-43](#)].

It is important to see that it is God who gave Israel victory and possession. Today our victory is in Christ. The victorious life is His life lived in us. Then we are blessed with all spiritual blessings, which are the possessions He has promised to us.

CHAPTERS 11 AND 12

Chapter 11

THEME: The northern campaign and the roster of conquered kings

Chapter 11 contains the campaign in the north and the conclusion of Joshua's leadership in war.

And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard those things, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph,

And to the kings that were on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Chinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west,

And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and to the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh.

And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many.

And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for to-morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hock their horses, and burn their chariots with fire [[Josh. 11:1-6](#)].

Jabin of Hazor in the north seems to have been the organizer. He sends out word to all the folk in that area to come against Joshua, because it is obvious now that he has overcome in the south and he is going to move to the north. And if he moves to the north, he will invade their land -- which, of course, is exactly what he did.

As we have seen, Joshua's strategy was to split the land in two, then move into the south (which couldn't get help, you see, from the north). Now the northern kings come together.

So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them [[Josh. 11:7](#)].

Joshua's strategy, after dividing the land in two, was to come upon the enemy suddenly. You will see that Alexander the Great and also Napoleon used these same tactics.

Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.

There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle [[Josh. 11:18-19](#)].

It was a long and bitter campaign.

Chapter 12 (11:1-19)

Now in chapter 12 we are given the names of the kings which Israel conquered. Frankly, a chapter like this is not very exciting to me. But the thing that impresses me is the detail that the God of this universe has given in items like this. We would think that He would constantly be dealing with great issues in grandiose terms, but God gets right down to the nitty-gritty where you and I live.

There is a lesson for us here. You and I sometimes hesitate to take to God in prayer the little details of our lives. We think, I ought not to talk to Him about things like that. Well, friend, talk to Him about those things. He wants to hear them.

A professor who was very liberal in his theology, said to me one time, "You take the Bible literally." "Yes," I said. "You certainly don't believe that God has books up there that He is going to open and look at." I think I shocked him when I said, "I sure do." He keeps the record, friend. Here is a chapter about these kings. I know nothing about them, but God does. He has the record.

He has two books: the Book of Works and the Lamb's Book of Life. Your name is written in one of them, my friend. It is written in the Book of Life when you trust Jesus Christ as your Savior. Your name will never be written there by your own effort. If your name is in this book, you have eternal life in Christ.

There is also a Book of Works. It records the details of everything you have ever done. It is going to be embarrassing for many people when they discover that all they did was give a cup of cold water that cost them nothing.

Recently a dear brother, a retired preacher with plenty of time on his hands, wrote me a twelve-page letter. I read it and much of the contents were meaningless to me. It mentioned places, people, and a church I knew nothing about. But God knows everything about that man and his life. He has it all written down. It is interesting to God. It adds real dimension to this life to realize that each little detail about His children is important to Him.

Chapter 13

THEME: Confirmation of land to the two and one-half tribes

Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed [[Josh. 13:1](#)].

We have passed only the halfway point in this book and we find that Joshua is already an old man and stricken in years. He is not going to be able to lead the children of Israel much longer. He is the leader God used to take the land, but the wars are over. He was about eighty years old when God called him, and now he is over one hundred years old. He had led Israel for many years. Time seems to have passed more quickly since Israel is in the land. The wilderness journey, by comparison, seemed long and drawn out. Now that Israel is in the land of milk and honey, they are laying hold of their possessions, and time passes quickly.

Friend, time would not pass so slowly for some people if they were living a life for God. My, how fast the time goes when you are serving Him! When I began my last pastorate, I was still a young man, and the twenty-one years just slipped by. Suddenly I discovered I was an old man and ready to retire. The most thrilling part of my ministry, however, has taken place since I retired. In my radio and conference ministry I have seen more results than at any time in my ministry. I have seen more of the hand of God, and I have been more conscious of His leading than at any time of my life. I think Joshua felt the same way.

From all outward appearances Israel seemed to be doing very well. They went into the land and drove a wedge right into the center of it. They conquered the south and went on to conquer the north, but the Lord reminded Joshua that there remained much land to be possessed. After doing a tremendous job, my friend, that will be true of you and me. It has been true of every servant of God; he will never accomplish all that he wished. In [Philippians 3:12](#) Paul says, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." God told Joshua that the land upon which the children of Israel walked would be theirs. They did not, however, walk on all of it. Neither will we ever be able to possess all of our spiritual possessions. I have met a few saints who think they have. They think there is nothing more for them to learn or do. They are satisfied with the life they

are leading and have no desire to press on to ". . . the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 3:14](#)).

The command of Joshua is terminated. He is no longer General Joshua. His next duty is to divide the land and especially to make sure that Moses' promises to the two and one-half tribes are confirmed.

Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh,

With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond Jordan eastward, even as Moses the servant of the LORD gave them [[Josh. 13:7-8](#)].

Joshua's commission ([Josh. 1:6](#)) not only included the subjugation of the land, but also the apportioning of it. He allocated not only those portions of Canaan that had already been conquered, but also those parts that were yet to be taken.

Chapter 14

THEME: Caleb given Hebron

The nine tribes and the half tribe are to have their inheritance by lot. Caleb, by privilege, obtains Hebron. Caleb, who was born a slave, was a spy with Joshua and brought back a favorable report the first time Israel came to Kadesh-barnea. According to [Joshua 14:11](#) Caleb had found the fountain of youth. He had: (1) Faith to forget the past; (2) Faith to face facts; and (3) Faith to face the future.

And these are the countries which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance to them.

By lot was their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half tribe [[Josh. 14:1-2](#)].

As you will see by the map, all the way from Dan to Beersheba the land is divided into tribes. Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh are on the east bank of the Jordan River. Then starting in the south and going north we have the tribes of Simeon, Judah, Benjamin, Dan, Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, Zebulun, Naphtali, Asher, and Dan.

As the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land.

Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenazite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea.

Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart.

Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God [[Josh. 14:5-8](#)].

Caleb was a man who "wholly followed the LORD." If you want a recipe for a long life and a good life, here it is.

And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.

As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in [[Josh. 14:10-11](#)].

Caleb is now eighty-five years old, and yet he can say that he is as strong as the day Moses sent him into Canaan as a spy! During the wilderness journey all of the first generation that came out of Egypt died except Caleb and Joshua. These men, along with ten other spies, brought back reports concerning the land of Canaan. The question was, "Could Israel conquer the land?" Joshua and Caleb were certain that with God's help Israel would be victorious in taking the land. The other ten spies saw giants in the land and wanted to return to Egypt. They wanted to go back to slavery, brickyards, the lash of the taskmasters, chains, shackles, and groaning under burdens. The Lord Jesus said, ". . . No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" ([Luke 9:62](#)). God had called Israel to go into the land of Canaan, and Caleb believed it could be done.

During those forty years I suppose that often someone would say to Caleb, "Oh, brother Caleb, isn't it terrible out here in this wilderness! It is so hot -- it's 118\$DG today!" Caleb would say, "I really hadn't noticed. I guess it is pretty warm, but I was thinking about those grapes of Eschol that I saw. And I was thinking about the city of Hebron. Our father Abraham liked that place, and I like it. That's where I am going." Caleb, even in the wilderness, could think of the future. He had a great hope. It kept him young. Those forty years in the wilderness killed off the rest of the crowd, but they didn't do a thing to him but make him healthy. They grew old, and he grew young. The giants in the Promised Land made the others tremble -- they thought of themselves as grasshoppers. But Caleb thought of God. There was freedom from fear in the heart of this man. As Martin Luther said, "One with God is a majority." God was bigger than the giants.

Caleb reminds me of Adoniram Judson, the missionary who spent twelve years in Burma without a convert. The board that sent him out didn't sense the situation nor what a tremendous missionary they had in Judson; so they wrote him a very diplomatic letter, suggesting that he should come home. They asked him what the prospects in Burma were for the future. His reply was, "The future is as bright as the promises of God." His confidence in God was the reason he could stay in the wilderness of Burma all those years. Although he suffered a great deal and it took a long time for revival to break out, it finally did. His time was well spent.

Are you enjoying all the spiritual blessings that God has for you today? You say, "I have lots of trouble." I know that Christians have many troubles in the course of their lives. My heart goes out to them. But I always think of the testimony of a Negro man who said his favorite Bible verse was, "It came to pass." When puzzled people asked him what he meant by that, he replied, "When I get into trouble and problems pile up, I turn to my verse and know my troubles have not come to stay; they have come to pass." There are a lot of things you can complain about, friend, and I do my share also, but what about your hope? What about the future? Caleb for forty years in that wilderness was enjoying all the spiritual blessings that were his.

Because Caleb believed God and was a man of faith, he said:

Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said [[Josh. 14:12](#)].

You will recall in Genesis that Abraham went to Hebron which means "communion." It was a place of fellowship. Caleb had fellowship with God and now he wants to reside at Hebron.

And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenazite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel [[Josh. 14:13-14](#)].

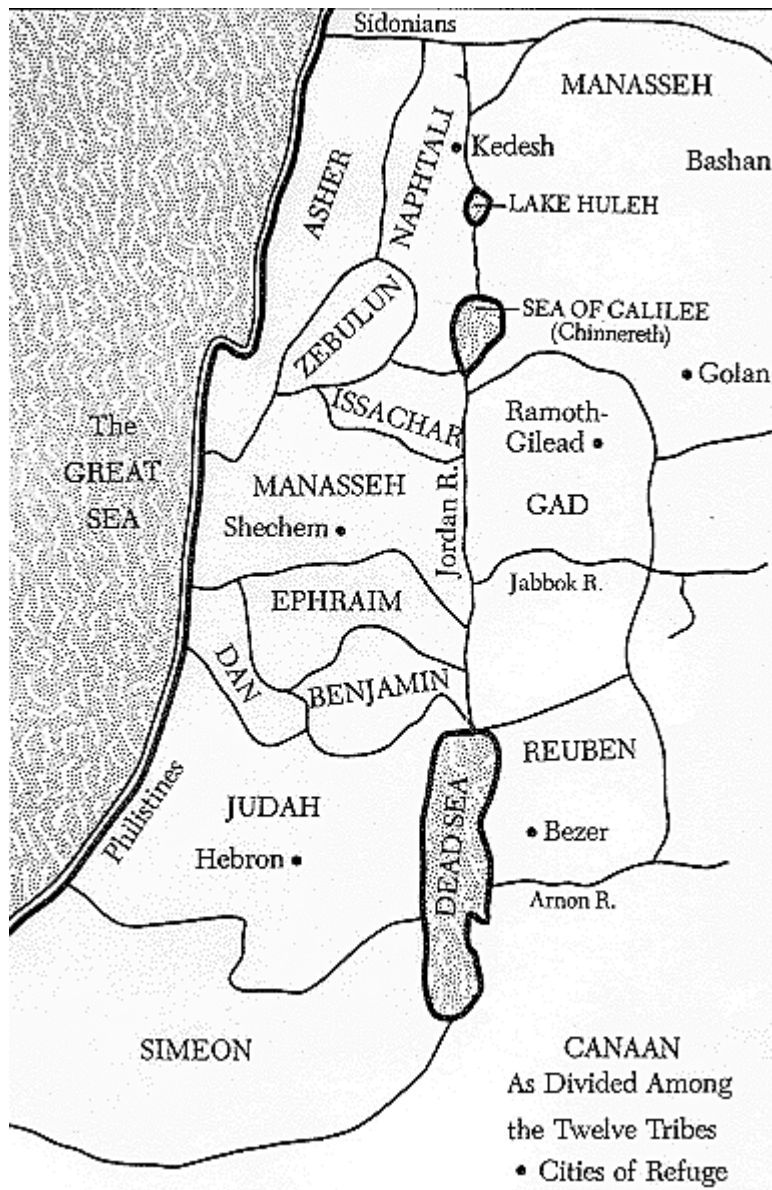
Friend, someday we will be rewarded. We will not be rewarded according to the great amount of work done for God, nor according to our prominence and popularity. The important thing will be -- did you wholly follow the Lord? Oh, that God's people would learn today that the most important thing in this life is to wholly follow the Lord! Caleb, man of God that he was, took Hebron. There were giants there, but he said, "That's the place I want. That's the very best spot!" Oh, that you and I might press toward the mark for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTERS 15--19

Chapter 15

THEME: Consignment of land to the tribes of Israel

This section includes the apportionment of the Promised Land given to the tribes that settled on the west side of the Jordan River. Chapter 15 deals with Judah's portion; chapter 16 with Ephraim's portion; chapter 17 with Manasseh's portion; and chapters 18 and 19 with the portions of Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan.



Picture: Canaan - As Divided

Among The Twelve Tribes

As important as this section was to the nation of Israel, it has no great significance to us. Therefore we shall lift out only the high points.

Portion Of Judah (15:13-19)

In chapter 14 we saw that Caleb was a member of the tribe of Judah and that God gave to him the city of Hebron. In chapter 15 we have more about this remarkable man. Also the boundaries of the entire tribe of Judah are given in this chapter.

And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, even the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron.

And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak [[Josh. 15:13-14](#)].

You see, the land old Caleb wanted was in giant country, and he was as ready to take on the giants now as when he was a young man.

And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher.

And Caleb said, he that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.

And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.

And it came to pass, as she came unto him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou?

Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs [[Josh. 15:15-19](#)].

The total area of the tribe of Judah is marked out in the first of the chapter; then cities are mentioned. You'll have difficulty finding most of them on your map because they are way down in Negev.

Chapter 16

Portion Of Ephraim (16:1-4)

Joseph was one of the twelve sons of Jacob, and his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, were each counted as a tribe. Because the tribe of Levi was the priestly tribe and was given no land, the total number of tribes inheriting the land was still only twelve tribes, rather than thirteen.

And the lot of the children of Joseph fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto the water of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout mount Beth-el,

And goeth out from Beth-el to Luz, and passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth,

And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti, unto the coast of Beth-horon the nether, and to Gezer: and the goings out thereof are at the sea.

So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance [[Josh. 16:1-4](#)].

Chapter 17

Portion Of Manasseh (17:14-18)

As you may recall, the tribe of Manasseh was divided. Half of the tribe settled on the east bank of the Jordan, but the other half crossed over and are now given their portion.

There is a remarkable instance in this chapter concerning the children of Joseph, and Ephraim in particular.

And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the LORD hath blessed me hitherto? [[Josh. 17:14](#)].

Ephraim was complaining because they had not been given a very large portion of land. In fact, Ephraim was given only about half of what Manasseh received. There were many people in the tribe of Ephraim. Joshua belonged to this tribe, and the Ephraimites probably felt that he would do something to help. Joshua, however, did nothing. The land they inherited was mountainous. The country is as rugged as any through which I have traveled. They were not satisfied.

And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee [[Josh. 17:15](#)].

If you travel to this area today, you will find that the hills are as bare as they are in Southern California. What happened to all of the trees? The enemies that have come into this country down through the centuries have completely denuded the hills. There is a great campaign in Israel right now to plant trees in that region. When I visited there, I planted five trees; one for myself, one for my wife, one for my daughter, one for the church in which I served, and one for a Jewish friend. Trees will grow here because the land was once covered with them.

By the way, in Christ's day the Mount of Olives was also covered with trees. If there had been just a little clump of trees, as there is today, His enemies would not have had any trouble finding Christ and His followers in the garden. Judas was needed to lead them through the jungle of trees and point out exactly where our Lord was.

Joshua's reply to his own tribe was noble.

And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only:

But the mountain shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong [[Josh. 17:17-18](#)].

Joshua says, "If you don't like what you have, go up and possess the mountains. But remember there are giants in the land. You'll have to work; you'll have to fight. It's going to cost you something."

It is time we stopped complaining and possessed more land.

A great preacher from New York City once took a vacation in northern New York state. He went to church on Sunday in a small country town, and to his surprise the young

pastor was preaching almost verbatim one of his published sermons. When the young man came out of the pulpit, and was greeting people at the door, the visiting pastor shook hands with him and asked, "Young man, I enjoyed your sermon this morning. How long did it take you to prepare it?" "Oh, it took me only about three hours," came his reply. "That is strange," said the famous preacher. "It took me about eight hours to prepare it."

It takes work to lay hold of spiritual possessions and blessings. Many years ago a student of mine entered the active ministry. He served in a church about three years and then came to see me. He was in distress because he said he was all preached out. I asked him how much time he spent studying and how long it took him to prepare a sermon. He told me that he did not spend much time studying and it took him about an hour to prepare a sermon. That was his problem. I spend anywhere from eight to twenty hours preparing a sermon. In order to lay hold of spiritual blessings, you are going to have to work hard. But remember that there is an enemy. There are giants in the land. Satan will trip you up if he can.

Another classmate of mine once complained to a professor about a book he was required to read. He claimed it was as dry as dust. "Well," said the professor, "why don't you dampen it with a little sweat from your brow?" This is a great argument for hard work. Joshua says to his tribe, "Don't come to me and complain. There is plenty of land for you. Go and get it."

Chapter 18

The Tabernacle Is Set Up At Shiloh (18:1)

And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them [[Josh. 18:1](#)].

The children of Israel pitched the tabernacle at Shiloh, a town in Ephraim. It was not, however to be the permanent place for the tabernacle because it was not the center of the land. God would choose a permanent site through David, which would one day be Jerusalem. But until the site changed, the children of Israel were to worship the Lord at Shiloh. The tabernacle remained in Shiloh during the whole period of the Judges.

Division Of The Remaining Land (18:2-3)

Now Joshua gives a challenge.

And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance.

And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you? [[Josh. 18:2-3](#)].

Seven of the tribes were standing around with their hands in their pockets. They said to Joshua, "What about this land? What are you going to give us?" Joshua told them, "You have been given a certain area. Go and possess your land. How long are you going to wait?"

This is also God's challenge to us. He has made available to us all spiritual blessings, but we are slack when it comes to claiming them. God has been so good to us. Oh, how we can thank Him for His grace, His love, His goodness, and His mercy. How wonderful He is! Why don't we move in and possess the land He has given to us?

After Joshua's challenge, the tribes began to move out and possess the land which had been allotted to them.

Portion For Benjamin (18:2-3)

The tribe of Benjamin received its inheritance between the land of Judah and the tribes of Ephraim and Dan.

Chapter 19

Portion For Simeon (19:9)

Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them [[Josh. 19:9](#)].

As we saw in chapter 15, the tribe of Judah was given a special preference because it was the kingly tribe. It will be in that tribe that the capital of the nation, both religious and political, will be established. The capital city will become Jerusalem, and we will see that David is the one who made that choice.

Because the land allotted to Judah was more than it needed, the southern portion was given to Simeon.

Portion For Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, Dan (19:9)

The tribe of Zebulun received a portion of land that was landlocked in lower Galilee. The inheritance of Issachar went from Mount Tabor on the west to the southern part of the Sea of Galilee. It also included territory in the coastal region from north of Mount Carmel to the approximate area of Tyre and Sidon. The tribe of Naphtali settled in the area of eastern Upper and Lower Galilee. The territory of Dan was located between Benjamin and the Mediterranean Sea. Later some of the Danites migrated northward and settled near the northern part of Naphtali.

This section reveals how much detail God gave concerning Israel and the land. The land and the people go together. God not only gave them the land of Canaan, He also gave a particular area to a particular tribe. He gave each tribe a certain section of land. God was concerned about each individual and his possession.

In this God has a lesson for you and me today. It tells us that God is concerned about our personal lives. My friend, for Him your private life is not private -- He knows you like a book. A rather godless neighbor said to me one day, "I want to go out into the desert where I can be by myself, and away from everybody." Well, that is a normal desire. We all need to get away from people once in awhile. But I reminded him -- and I don't think he appreciated it -- that he wouldn't get away from God. I said, "You can't run away from Him, brother. He will be right out there in the desert waiting for you." It is wonderful,

friend, to get away from people like that, if we are getting away for fellowship with the Lord.

Joshua Receives A Special Portion (19:49-51)

When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them:

According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked, even Timnath-serah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein.

These are the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, divided for an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. So they made an end of dividing the country [[Josh. 19:49-51](#)].

You would think that because Joshua was a man of God, had successfully led the children of Israel against the Canaanites, and had been victorious, that the Israelites would tell him that he could pick out any spot he wanted in which to settle. But that is not what happened. The Israelites did not offer him the choice spots in which to settle. Joshua made his own choice. It was a place called Timnath-serah. It was about eleven miles from Shiloh. It was a barren place, and one of the worst spots Joshua could have chosen. It reminds me of Abraham and Lot when they returned from the land of Egypt. Abraham said to Lot, "You pick any section you want and I will take what is left of this land." Lot took the very best and left Abraham holding the bag. This incident shows the character of these men. Joshua chose land that was similar to the backside of the desert. This is certainly a revelation of his character. It also reveals something about the Israelites. They were perfectly willing to let this man of God have a small, barren place as his portion.

In my opinion it is equally as shameful to see a church or Christian organization that has been served by a faithful worker, let that worker grow old and retire without making any arrangement for a pension for him. Cold-blooded business corporations take care of their employees when they retire, but God's people often fail to do this.

Chapter 20

THEME: Cities of refuge

The cities of refuge set before us a vivid scene which has a remarkable lesson for us. God gave to the children of Israel a commandment regarding setting aside certain cities for refuge. It is interesting that many tribes and many primitive people have had this same thing. Evidently this is something that was passed on to all mankind. The cities of refuge were for the protection of one who had killed another accidentally.

In the Hawaiian Islands, on the Kona coast of the Big Island, there is a place known as the City of Refuge. It was in use back in the days before Christianity came to the Islands, when the tribes were slaying each other and even offering human sacrifices. It is there as a tourist attraction today.

God's commandment for the establishment of cities of refuge was first given in [Exodus 21:13](#): "And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee." Then explicit directions for the cities of refuge are given in [Numbers 35](#) -- the entire chapter. "Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares" ([Num. 35:11](#)).

Now that the children of Israel are in the Promised Land and each tribe has been allotted its portion of land, the Lord speaks to Joshua about assigning certain cities to be cities of refuge.

Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses:

That the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood [[Josh. 20:2-3](#)].

If one man killed another, it would be one of two things. It would either be manslaughter -- that is, the killing of another accidentally, or it would be premeditated murder. In Israel a murderer would be stoned to death. If in our society we had capital punishment for murder, with no "ifs" and "ands" about it, and the man who was guilty was executed quickly, it would save countless lives. We wouldn't be seeing our police officers shot down or storekeepers held up and murdered without mercy. My friend, God knows human nature. This was His law. However, if one killed another unintentionally, without premeditation, he is to be provided protection. There is an example given in Scripture of two men out in the woods, cutting down a tree. The axe head comes off the handle and strikes one of the men and kills him. Suppose the brother of the slain man says, "I know that man had it in for my brother. He did that purposely. I'm going to kill him!" That man wouldn't have a chance unless there was a place of refuge. So the man who had been responsible for the death would be given the opportunity of running to one of the cities of refuge.

And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.

And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime.

And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled [[Josh. 20:4-6](#)].

The city of refuge has a great spiritual lesson for you and me. The Lord Jesus Christ was slain. And the Scripture makes it clear that not only was the Lord Jesus Christ slain, but He is our city of refuge today. Speaking of Christ as our refuge, the writer of Hebrews

says, "who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." The reference, of course, is to those who, though conscious of their own sinfulness, have availed themselves of the salvation that was secured for them by our Lord upon the cross. All who find a refuge in Him are saved forever from the judgment of a holy God.

Now who is guilty of slaying Christ? The whole world is guilty. Both Jew and Gentile stand guilty before God as having participated in that which brought about the death of His Son. But Christ came to give Himself a ransom for all. And His sacrifice on the cross has opened up, as it were, a city of refuge for all who put their trust in Him.

It is absolutely wrong to try to blame the Jew for the crucifixion of Christ. He was not crucified on a Jewish cross; He was crucified on a Roman cross. But it is useless to pin the blame on any one people. One racial group is as guilty as another. We all are in the same position. We are all guilty.

Peter, in his second sermon to his Jewish brethren, said, "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled" ([Acts 3:17-18](#)). Therefore Peter could say to them, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted."

The apostle Paul makes it clear that the Gentiles are also guilty. "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. . . . Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" ([1Cor. 2:6, 8](#)).

According to these passages, God looks upon the whole world as guilty of the sin of manslaughter in connection with the death of Christ. To be specific, you are guilty. But you can point the finger right back at me and say, "You are guilty." But, thank God, His death made a city of refuge, a place for you and me to come.

As the song writer, George Keith, put it,
How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?
Have you fled to Jesus for refuge? There is protection there. What a wonderful chapter this is!

Chapter 21

THEME: Cities for Levites

The Levites were not given any land as were the other tribes. Instead they were given cities in the other tribes. They were scattered out so that they could minister to the people. Levi was the priestly tribe.

Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites unto
Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the
heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel;

And they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying,
The LORD commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to
dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle [[Josh. 21:1-2](#)].

Apparently they had a suburban problem in that day also. The Levites were to be given forty cities in which to dwell -- all the way from Dan in the north to Beer-sheba in the south.

The division of the land is completed now.

And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give
unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.

And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he
sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their
enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into
their hand [[Josh. 21:43-44](#)].

The children of Israel now possessed the land of Canaan, but that was only a small segment of the land God had promised them. If they are to get any more land, they will have to go and possess it. The rule still stands that every place their feet stand upon will be theirs. That which the Israelites possess now, however, is free from the enemy and they can enter into rest.

The rest for us today is the rest of redemption. It is the rest that we desperately need. We live in an age of tension. There are many pressures, and if there is one thing that the average Christian needs, it is to enter into the rest God has provided.

As we shall see as we move into the Book of Judges, Israel failed to completely rid her possession of her enemies. Why? Because of her unbelief. Even Joshua could not give them the rest they needed since they failed to believe God and appropriate His power.

The writer of the Hebrews warns us about repeating Israel's failure: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" ([Heb. 4:9-11](#)). How do you and I enter into that rest? By faith, that is the only way.

At the time of Christ, when Israel rejected Him as King and He rejected their cities, He gave a personal invitation which stands yet today, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" ([Matt. 11:28](#)). That rest is the rest of redemption.

Now here in [Joshua 21](#) the people have entered into the rest -- at least temporarily -- which God had provided for them. My, how wonderful it must have been after the long, weary journey through the wilderness and the warfare to take their possessions, to settle down on their own parcel of ground. What a thrill it must have been to cultivate it and eat the fruits of it.

Chapter 22

THEME: The two and one-half tribes are sent home; they build the altar of witness

As you will recall, the two and one-half tribes did not take their inheritance in the land with the other tribes. They remained on the east side of the Jordan River. They could have the inheritance they wanted only if they sent their armies into the land to help conquer it. This is what they did and, when the battle was won, they were free to return home.

Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh,

And said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you:

Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God [[Josh. 22:1-3](#)].

Just before the two and one-half tribes leave, Joshua calls them together and commends them for a job well done. He tells them that they have done a fine thing by helping their brethren. Then he gives them a warning.

But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul [[Josh. 22:5](#)].

These tribes are warned that even though they have chosen to dwell on the wrong side of the Jordan, they are still to follow the Mosaic system. After Joshua warns them about their duty, he dismisses them with a blessing.

So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents [[Josh. 22:6](#)].

The two and one-half tribes returned home.

And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to [[Josh. 22:10](#)].

They apparently built this altar on the west side of the Jordan River. It was an altar "to see to." This is a strange expression. Literally it means an altar "great to sight." This means that it could be seen from a great distance. It was an imposing structure. Bible scholars searched for the ruins of this altar on the east side of Jordan. But finally an archaeologist discovered the ruins on the west side of Jordan, and they are there today, located in a prominent place, a great altar in appearance. They built this monument to remind them of something. When the rest of the children of Israel heard what they had done, they became upset and gathered at Shiloh.

And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them [[Josh. 22:12](#)].

The children of Israel believed the two and one-half tribes were building an altar upon which to offer sacrifices. They thought it was an attempt to divide the nation.

Thus saith the whole congregation of the LORD, What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the LORD?

Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD [[Josh. 22:16-17](#)].

The children of Israel accused the two and one-half tribes of building an altar to Baal. They remembered the time that Balaam had caused Israel to sin by seducing them to marry Moabite women and commit spiritual adultery. At that time God had judged them severely, and they were afraid it was going to happen again.

However, the two and one-half tribes give a good explanation for what they had done.

Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh answered, and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel,

The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the LORD, (save us not this day,)

That we have built us an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let the LORD himself require it [[Josh. 22:21-23](#)].

They had not built an altar for purpose of offering sacrifices. The altar was simply a reminder that they still belonged to the nation Israel. It may have been an enlarged model of the altar of burnt offering found in the tabernacle, but it was not intended for sacrifices.

And if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the LORD God of Israel? [[Josh. 22:24](#)].

The two and one-half tribes were sincere in what they had done, and the nine and one-half tribes accepted their explanation.

And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the LORD is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the LORD; now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD [[Josh. 22:31](#)].

The children of Israel realized that they had been hasty in accusing the two and one-half tribes. They remind me of some of us who are sometimes a little hasty. We say and do things we should not say and do, and we are sincere in thinking we are defending the Word of God when in reality we are not. The children of Israel made a mistake in coming against their brethren with thoughts of war.

And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar
Ed: for it shall be a witness between us that the LORD is God
[Josh. 22:34].

On the surface, the building of this altar sounds like a good idea, and many commentators have placed their seal of approval upon it. However, let's take more than a cursory look at this altar called "Ed." In the tabernacle was the brazen altar for sacrifices. There was to be no other. [Deuteronomy 12:27](#) says, "And thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the LORD thy God: and the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of the LORD thy God, and thou shalt eat the flesh." Israel was told to destroy all other altars. "But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves" ([Exod. 34:13](#)). There was to be but one exception, in [Deuteronomy 27:4-8](#), where Israel is told to take twelve stones out of the Jordan River and put them up as a memorial. The two and one-half tribes never crossed over Jordan, and the river actually divided them from their brethren. This altar recognized that division. This altar was prima facie evidence that they were divided. It made way for the division later on. Right now Israel is divided east and west. It is nine and one-half tribes versus two and one-half tribes at this point, but later on it will be a north and south division with ten tribes in the north against two tribes in the south.

The brazen altar in the tabernacle, typifying the redemptive work of Christ, was a place of unity. And friend, I can meet with any man who will exalt Jesus Christ. In [John 17:20-21](#) Jesus prayed, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." There is an organic unity of those who are in Christ. The altar speaks of the death of Christ as a sacrifice.

As the two and one-half tribes built a bloodless altar which had divided Israel, today those who are liberal in their theology have divided the church. They have accused fundamentalists of being schismatic, but it is liberalism that has departed from the cross and the deity of Christ. They do not like an altar with blood. They have put up an "Ed," if you please. They worship at an altar where no sacrifice is to be offered. They have a "bloodless" Christ. Like the two and one-half tribes, their conduct reveals that they have departed from the truth. Our Lord said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits . . ." ([Matt. 7:16](#)). Several hundred years later the Lord Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee and came to the country of the Gadarenes. The people living there were from the tribe of Gad, and they were still living on the wrong side of the Jordan River. Our Lord came upon a demon-possessed man dwelling in the tombs, and He cast the demons out of the man and gave them permission to enter a herd of pigs nearby. The Gadarenes were in the pig business! Can you imagine an Orthodox Jew in the pig business? They had failed to follow the commandments of God. They were on the wrong side of Jordan.

Liberalism has indeed divided the church. It has erected a beautiful altar, a "bloodless" Christ, one who never actually lived, one without deity, one without ability to save humanity.

My friend, have you crossed over Jordan? Have you entered into the rest of redemption which Christ offers?

CHAPTERS 23 AND 24

Chapter 23

THEME: The last message of Joshua

In chapter 23 Joshua calls the leaders of Israel to courage and certainty. Then in chapter 24 he calls to the tribes of Israel for consecration and consideration of the covenant of God. The chapter closes with the death of Joshua.

A deathbed message is becoming very familiar in the Word of God. You recall that Jacob called his twelve sons about him and gave prophecies concerning each of them. Then Moses called the twelve tribes -- the sons are now tribes -- to him and blessed them. Now Joshua, who has been their leader for forty years there in the Land of Promise, is giving them his final message before his death.

And it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age.

And Joshua called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and stricken in age:

And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God is he that hath fought for you [[Josh. 23:1-3](#)].

You will notice that Joshua calls the people about him and says, "I am now ready to retire; I am a senior citizen, and I have some final words for you. You have seen what God has done for you."

Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward.

And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you.

Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left [[Josh. 23:4-6](#)].

Joshua is calling them to do what Moses had called them to do.

That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them:

But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day [[Josh. 23:7-8](#)].

The grave danger of crossing the Jordan River, facing an enemy in a strange land, encountering the unknown on every hand, and meeting fear on every side, had kept Israel close to the Lord. Joshua recognized that now, since they had entered into rest and were enjoying prosperity and plenty, they would drift away from God. That is the story of human nature. It never changes.

At the time of this writing, I feel that the United States is facing a similar situation. After World War II, I was disturbed that God had judged Europe and even Russia and Korea. How these nations suffered, but we came through unscathed! While other nations went through a period of hardship, our nation entered an era of prosperity and affluence. I could not understand why God did not judge us. Then I realized that He was testing us with prosperity. The most dangerous period any people can go through is not the time of grave danger and suffering, but the time of peace and plenty.

This is the reason Joshua is giving Israel this charge. "God has done these wonderful things for you; now stay close to Him, and obey Him. If you do this, God will continue to bless you." Then he warns them what will happen if they turn from their God.

Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God.

Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you:

Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you [[Josh. 23:11-13](#)].

He warns that God's judgment would be upon them.

Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you [[Josh. 23:15-16](#)].

This is more of a prediction than a warning. As we well know, this prediction is now history.

Chapter 24

The Last Message Of Joshua (continued) (24:2-33)

In chapter 24 Joshua again gathers the people together, and they present themselves before the Lord. Joshua relays to them God's review of their history and His gracious dealings with them.

And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods [[Josh. 24:2](#)].

This reveals something that we didn't know before, although we suspected it. When God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, He called him out of a home of idolatry. Terah, his father, we are told here, served other gods.

This raises the question: Why did God choose Abraham and make a nation from him? Let's consider the background. After the Tower of Babel, man totally departed from the Lord. No one served God -- not even Terah the father of Abraham. When God confused the language, the people scattered in every direction, and they took with them a knowledge of the true and living God, which is the reason even pagan tribes today have a knowledge of the true God, although they do not worship Him. There was total apostasy after Babel.

Now what will God do that will be consistent with His person, His attributes, and His character? He could judge the human family and remove it from the earth. He could make the earth as bleak as the moon if He wanted to. But He didn't. He will recover mankind. He will begin with one man. That man was Abraham, who must have had a desire in his heart to know the living and true God. When God called him, He told him to leave Ur and all his family. Now we know why. Terah was an idolater. God called him away from all that in order to deal with him and make of him a nation through which the Messiah would come into the world.

Now God formed the nation in the brickyards of Egypt. (And, friends, if God is going to make anything of you and me, He will take us through the fire to do it. He won't use the molly-coddle of our contemporary churches, I can assure you!)

I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out.

And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea.

And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season [[Josh. 24:5-7](#)].

God continues to trace His care of them: delivering them from the Amorites who fought them and from Balaam who tried to curse them, bringing them across the Jordan and delivering them from the inhabitants of the land who fought against them.

And I have given you a land for which ye did not labor, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat [[Josh. 24:13](#)].

Now the people of Israel are settled in the land. But, because they did not get rid of the civilization that was there, they are surrounded by idolatry. They are in real danger. Realizing this, Joshua calls them to a real dedication to God, a turning over of their lives completely to Him. Listen to him.

Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD [[Josh. 24:14-15](#)].

The more I know about Joshua, the better I like him. Through the years he has stood in the shadow of Moses so that we think he is a sort of miniature Moses. But Joshua is a man of great stature. God made no mistake in choosing this man. Although Joshua is an average man, this book reveals that an average man dedicated to God can be mightily used. He says to the nation, "Do you want to go back to the gods of your fathers, those pagan gods which they served? Or do you want to serve the gods of the Amorites? You can choose. But as for me and my house, we have made our choice; we are going to serve the Lord!" Friend, this was a tremendous challenge to all the tribes of Israel to consider their covenant with God.

Notice the response of the people.

And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;

For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed [[Josh. 24:16-17](#)].

You would think that because of the fantastic way God worked with Israel they would stay close to Him and serve Him. It is easy to point a finger back about 3,580 years ago and say what a sorry lot Israel was. What terrible failures they were. What about us today? How close are we staying to the living God?

If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good [[Josh. 24:20](#)].

God also has been so good to us that many people live in a lackadaisical manner without any regard as to the blessings He has showered upon them. Many people think they can

do exactly as they please. It is true that He is a God of mercy, love, and comfort, but He is also a God of judgment.

And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD [[Josh. 24:21](#)].

These sound like good intentions on the part of Israel, don't they?

So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD [[Josh. 24:25-26](#)].

In other words, what Joshua wrote was put on the same scroll that contained the five books of Moses.

This brings us to the death of Joshua.

And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old.

And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash [[Josh. 24:29-30](#)].

Joshua was buried in that barren place he had chosen for his inheritance.

And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.

And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph [[Josh. 24:31-32](#)].

At the time of Joshua's death he must have been held in high esteem because Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua. This was the effect of his godly influence.

Joseph was the father of Ephraim and Manasseh. When these two sons left Egypt, they brought their father's bones with them and carried them for forty years in the wilderness. They had promised Joseph they would bury his bones in the Promised Land. Why? Because he was expecting to be raised from the dead in that land.

And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim [[Josh. 24:33](#)].

Aaron was the first priest to die; Eleazar was the second. The Book of Joshua is bound by death. It begins with the death of Moses and ends with the deaths of Joshua and Eleazar.

The thing that interests me in this verse, however, is the fact that they buried Eleazar in the hill that pertained to Phinehas, his son, which was given him in Mount Ephraim. The question is, "Where did Phinehas get this land?" The priests were given no land, and yet this man acquired a nice little parcel of real estate. Here is a beginning of departure from the living and true God, which will become obvious in the Book of Judges.

Bibliography

(For Bibliography to Joshua, see Bibliography at the end of Judges.)